



## American Philological Association

---

How the Apple Became the Token of Love

Author(s): Eugene Stock McCartney

Source: *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 56 (1925), pp. 70-81

Published by: [The Johns Hopkins University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/282885>

Accessed: 25/05/2013 15:10

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



American Philological Association and The Johns Hopkins University Press are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

## V.—How the Apple Became the Token of Love

BY EUGENE STOCK MCCARTNEY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The most famous apple of history, the Apple of Discord,<sup>1</sup> was inscribed, according to Lucian, ἡ καλὴ λαβέτω.<sup>2</sup> It was an apple of discord only because it was an apple of love. Other famous apples are those with which Hippomenes won his race with his beloved. In antiquity apples were presented to sweethearts as a proffer or declaration of love.<sup>3</sup> In some expressions the word 'apple' became synonymous with 'love.' Oftentimes apples were tossed or thrown. To say that a person had been 'struck by an apple' was tantamount to saying that he had been 'love-struck.'<sup>4</sup>

A recent writer<sup>5</sup> thinks it probable "that there was some basis in real life for the throwing of apples at the bridegroom which Stesichorus speaks of in his *Epithalamium of Helen*." <sup>6</sup> In view of evidence to be presented later and in view of an epigram in the Greek Anthology, quoted below,<sup>7</sup> it would seem clear that the purpose was the same as the throwing of

<sup>1</sup> The expression *malum discordiae* is used figuratively by Justinus, xii, 15, 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Dial. Mar.* 5; *Dial. Deor.* 20, 7. Cf. Hyg. *Fab.* 92; Tzetzes on Lycophron, 93; *Myth. Vat.* i, 208; ii, 205.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Verg. *E.* 3, 64; Theocr. 5, 88; 6, 6; 11, 10; and especially the Greek Anthology v, 79. "The classical custom of throwing an apple into a girl's lap as a sign of love is a method of wooing still known to the rustic swain."—Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, p. 558.

<sup>4</sup> Scholium on Ar. *Nub.* 997.

<sup>5</sup> Foster on page 45 of the article cited three paragraphs farther on in the text.

<sup>6</sup> Frag. 29 (Bergk, 1882).

<sup>7</sup> v, 79.

τῷ μήλω βάλλω σε· σὺ δ' εἰ μὲν ἐκοῦσα φιλεῖς με,  
δεξαμένη, τῆς σῆς παρθενίης μετὰδος·  
εἰ δ' ἄρ' ὃ μὴ γίγνοιτο νοεῖς, τοῦτ' αὐτὸ λαβοῦσα  
σκέψαι τὴν ὥρην ὡς ὀλιγοχρόνιος.

rice among our own people<sup>8</sup> or of wheat among other peoples. "At a certain stage in the wedding ceremony of the German Jews, the friends who stand round throw wheat on the couple and say, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'"<sup>9</sup>

A French writer<sup>10</sup> concludes that originally the act of throwing an apple had absolutely no symbolic significance. He believes that it was simply a means of drawing attention and that fruit was preferable to a flower because it was heavier and hence could be thrown farther. He says quite rightly that the kind of fruit used in any particular case would depend on the flora of the country. His assumption that fruit was associated with love because it was *thrown* is a purely gratuitous one. The problem is not merely one of ballistics. The act of eating has far more significance in this connection.

Among the Greeks apples that had been bitten were sent as tokens of love.<sup>11</sup> A suggestion of the original purpose of the biting may be derived from analogies. "Annamite stories tell how a virgin conceived . . . by eating the rind of a watermelon, the rest of which had been eaten by a prince."<sup>12</sup> The Persian bridegroom ate a *μηλον* or the marrow<sup>13</sup> of a camel before entering the marriage-chamber.<sup>14</sup> In Moham-medan lore the man eats the fruit (or seeds), being inordinately

<sup>8</sup> "The throwing of rice after a couple increases the probability of their having children."—Daniel L. and Lucy B. Thomas, *Kentucky Superstitions*, no. 688.

<sup>9</sup> Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, I, p. 109: cf. Wood, *The Wedding Day in All Ages and Countries*, I, pp. 19, 43, 203, 219; II, pp. 49, 169, 184, 199, 224.

<sup>10</sup> H. Gaidoz, "La Réquisition d'Amour et le Symbolisme de la Pomme," *École pratique des hautes études*, Annuaire 1902, pp. 5-33.

<sup>11</sup> Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* 12, 1; *Toxaris*, 13.

<sup>12</sup> Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. IV, p. 139.

<sup>13</sup> The marrow was one of the seats of love. The flame of love eats at the marrow of Dido (Verg. *Aen.* IV, 66; I, 660). In another instance, *Aen.* IV, 101, Dido arouses fury in her bones because of her love. The pith of a plant corresponds to the marrow of an animal. A person who carries with him the pith of branches of *tithymallus* is rendered more amorous thereby.—Pliny, *H. N.* XXVI, 99.

<sup>14</sup> Strabo, XV, 3, 17.

desirous of male children.<sup>15</sup> One type of Roman marriage, the *confarreatio*, got its name from the joint eating of bread by the newly married.<sup>16</sup> The eating of a pomegranate seed by Persephone in the home of Hades rendered it impossible for her to break the bonds of her enforced marriage.<sup>17</sup> In general the sharing in the eating establishes a more intimate and potent bond, as happens also when guest and host partake of a meal.<sup>18</sup>

In an article called "Notes on the Symbolism of the Apple in Classical Antiquity," contributed to *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* (x, 39-55) by B. O. Foster, numerous instances are given from classical literature of the apple as a token of love.<sup>19</sup> This rich collection of material is deserving of more general recognition.

Foster concludes (p. 55) that "in the remotely ancient attribution of the apple and the apple-kind, as typical of all fruitfulness, to Aphrodite—the *alma Venus* of Lucretius's invocation—and its connexion also with other divinities of like functions (such as Dionysus, the god of vegetation, and Ge, the mother of all things), originated the meaning which it was felt to have when employed in courtship and the marriage ceremony." He adds, however, that "the evidence on the subject left us by the classical authors does not enable us to take the next step, and offer an explanation of the fact that

<sup>15</sup> Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, I, p. 79.

<sup>16</sup> Dion. H. II, 25; Gaius, *Inst.* I, 112.

<sup>17</sup> *H. Hom. Cer.* 371-374; Apollod. I, 5, 3 (see Frazer's note *ad loc.*); Ovid, *Met.* v, 530-538. Ovid, however, says that she ate seven seeds. The pomegranate seed as a symbol of fertility will be mentioned later.

<sup>18</sup> For many other instances, most of which are farther afield, see Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, II<sup>3</sup>, pp. 448-452; Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, II, pp. 343-349; Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, I, p. 72. On drinking together as a marriage bond see Campbell Bonner, "A Primitive Marriage-Custom in the *Kebra Nagast*," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XXVIII, 317-323.

<sup>19</sup> For other groups of references see *Archäologische Zeitung*, XXI, 47; XXXI, 36-40; Palmer, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Heroides*, pp. 481-482; R. Ellis, *Commentary on Catullus*<sup>2</sup>, p. 353; Frazer, *Pausanias*, III, p. 67; P.-W., *Real-Encyclopädie*, s.v. Eris, p. 465. Ellis makes the suggestion that the apple as a symbol of love may be due to "a supposed resemblance to the breasts."

the apple was used in preference to other objects, as representing the life-giving functions of these deities."

There is a very simple explanation of the selection of the apple as a token of love in preference to other fruits. The answer will be deferred until an effort has been made to explain why certain forms of vegetation symbolized fecundity.

In the first place many of the apples of antiquity were merely 'so-called' apples, or, to use Foster's expression, 'of the apple kind.' Greek and Latin words for 'apple' had both general and specific uses, and in addition many adjectives such as 'Punic,' 'Persian,' and 'Median' were applied to them.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, many of the 'so-called' apples were 'golden' apples.

The apples with which Hippomenes beguiled Atalanta are described as 'golden' apples.<sup>21</sup> They had been plucked by Aphrodite herself in her own garden at Tamassos in Cyprus.<sup>22</sup> An epigram in the Greek Anthology<sup>23</sup> says that the golden apple was a wedding-gift and the symbol of the yoke of Aphrodite. When the marriage of Hera was being celebrated and all the deities were making presents, Earth brought forth in the extreme regions of Africa a tree bearing golden apples.<sup>24</sup> Servius describes as a golden apple the fruit used in the judgment of Paris.<sup>25</sup> According to him<sup>26</sup> too the apples in the garden of the Hesperides were golden apples and they were consecrated to Venus. It was from this source, he says, that the three golden apples of Hippomenes came. The comic poet Eriphus<sup>27</sup> describes as golden the apples which

<sup>20</sup> Compare, for instance, Pliny, *H. N.* xv, 39: *Mala appellamus, quamquam diversi generis, Persica et granata, quae in Punicis arboribus novem generum dicta sunt.* See also the article *Apfel* in P.-W., *Real-Encyclopädie*.

<sup>21</sup> *Anth. P.* xvi, 144.

<sup>22</sup> Ovid, *Met.* x, 644-650.

<sup>23</sup> xvi, 144.

<sup>24</sup> Serv. *ad Aen.* iv, 484; Pseudo-Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*, 3; Ath. iii, 83 C; scholium on Ap. Rh. iv, 1396; Apollod. ii, 5, 11. See Frazer's edition of Apollodorus, i, p. 220.

<sup>25</sup> *Ad Aen.* i, 27.

<sup>26</sup> *Ad Aen.* iv, 484.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted by Ath. iii, 84 C.

Hercules carried away and says that Aphrodite herself had planted in Cyprus the single parent tree from which they had been derived.

Now what were the golden apples so commonly referred to in both Greek and Latin? In the passage from Eriphus the speaker is asked if *poi* are not meant by 'golden apples.' This is a specific and unambiguous word for pomegranate. Polyclitus put a pomegranate in the hand of Hera in the Argive Heraeum.<sup>28</sup> Victor Hehn<sup>29</sup> says that the apple of the judgment of Paris was *ohne Zweifel* thought of originally as the pomegranate. Athenaeus<sup>30</sup> makes Jobas, king of the Mauretanians, authority for the statement that the Libyans called the Hesperian apple citron and that the golden apples carried back by Heracles were citrons. Boetticher<sup>31</sup> holds that they were oranges. The word *chrysomela* was used by Pliny<sup>32</sup> to designate a species of quince.

It may be stated by way of parenthesis that Agoritas,<sup>33</sup> a writer on things Libyan, thought that the entire story of the apples of the Hesperides was figurative language. He explains that the so-called apples were in reality cattle, which when very beautiful were called sheep. Because of his fierceness the shepherd that guarded them was described as a serpent. Of course this theory is due to an etymological pun.

Another sentence from Hehn<sup>34</sup> is worth quoting in the

<sup>28</sup> Paus. II, 17, 4.

<sup>29</sup> *Kulturpflanzen und Haustierte in ihrem Übergang aus Asien nach Griechenland und Italien*, p. 233.

<sup>30</sup> III, 83 B.

<sup>31</sup> *Der Baumkultus der Hellenen*, p. 466: Dieser goldene Hesperische Apfel ist nun nach allem was sich darüber sicher ermitteln lässt die Orange, Pomeranze, zu der auch die Citrone gehört, also der Medische, Assyrische oder Persische Apfel.

If oranges were not introduced into Spain and Italy until the advent of the Moors and the return of the crusaders, it is hard to see how the 'golden apples' could be oranges.

<sup>32</sup> *H. N.* xv, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Scholium on Ap. Rh. iv, 1396. Varro, *R. R.* II, 1, 6-7, is interesting in this connection. Servius *ad Aen.* iv, 484.

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 241.

German: "Die χρύσεα μήλα der Hesperiden und der Atalante waren idealisirte Quitten, und der der Aphrodite geweihte, in Mädchen- und Liebesspielen aller Art und zu bräutlichen Gaben dienende Apfel war gleichfalls kein anderer als der duftende Quittenapfel." It is interesting to compare with this a passage in Boetticher:<sup>35</sup> "Die Kydonischen Äpfel, Quittenäpfel, die aus Kreta stammten, möchten wohl keine andern sein als jene oben erwähnten Melusäpfel; denn nach Ovid sollte dieser heilige Baum vor dem Tempel der Aphrodite hier stehen und dieselben Äpfel schon Hippomenes von ihr empfangen haben um die Atalante sich damit zu gewinnen."

The association of the apple with Venus seems to be fairly late. A modern investigator says that the original attribute in her hand is a mandrake.<sup>36</sup>

These views, ancient and modern, are noted, not with the idea of identifying the various kinds of golden apples, but of showing that several kinds of fruit must have been regarded as tokens of love. It may be observed in passing that in our own lore tomatoes are called 'love apples.'

In many plants the most obvious indication of fecundity is seeds. The Greek marriage cake was made of sesame because this plant was extremely prolific and had become a symbol of productivity.<sup>37</sup> It was believed also that conception was aided by attaching to one as an amulet the seed of a wild cucumber that had not touched the ground.<sup>38</sup> A statue of Aphrodite at Sicyon held in one hand an apple and in the other a poppy.<sup>39</sup> The poppy too was a symbol of fruitfulness,<sup>40</sup> obviously because of its many seeds. Some people asserted that women would be sure to conceive in forty days if they

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 463.

<sup>36</sup> See Rendell Harris's chapter on "The Origin of the Cult of Aphrodite," in *The Ascent of Olympus*.

<sup>37</sup> Photius, *s.v.* σήσαμον; scholium on Ar. *Av.* 159; scholium on *Pax*, 869; Menander, frag. 938 (Koch).

<sup>38</sup> Pliny, *H. N.* xx, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Paus. ii, 10, 5.

<sup>40</sup> See Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie* (1894), p. 766.

took in drink the blossom of the *crataegonon*.<sup>41</sup> It was thought that the seeds of a species of mallow properly applied increased sexual desire.<sup>42</sup>

In Boeotia it was customary to set upon the head of a bride a chaplet of asparagus.<sup>43</sup> Plutarch says that this plant grows a very sweet fruit from a rough stalk. I cannot see that this fruit refers to anything but the berries.<sup>44</sup> It is clear, however, from Plutarch's remarks that fertility was symbolized and that the bride, like the plant, was to be productive. Pliny<sup>45</sup> tells us that the seed of asparagus entered into aphrodisiacs. "Asparagus seeds and young hop-buds prepared as salad are given to women in Styria to prevent barrenness."<sup>46</sup>

Another many-seeded fruit is the fig. We are told that the fig-tree is more productive than other trees.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps for this reason Roman women sacrificed to Juno Caprotina under a wild fig-tree.<sup>48</sup> In the Bacchic revelries at Rome the women wore collars of figs as symbols of fecundity.<sup>49</sup> Among

<sup>41</sup> Pliny, *H. N.* xxvii, 63.

<sup>42</sup> *Op. cit.* xx, 227.

<sup>43</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 138 D.

<sup>44</sup> Did the Boeotians like the berries of asparagus? There is no accounting for tastes. The head of the poppy was used as food (Thuc. iv, 26). The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, 372, calls the seeds of the pomegranate 'honey-sweet.' As a matter of fact they are not unpalatable. It seems, to judge from Theophr. *H. P.* iv, 3, 3, to have been customary to eat the seed of the pomegranate along with the flesh. It was once the custom to eat caraway seeds as a carminative. See T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *Folk Lore of Shakespeare* (1883), p. 196. In Greece and Italy one still frequently finds them on bread and buns. I have seen pumpkin seeds dried as an edible. Some people like watermelon seeds. Nasturtium seeds which have not yet ripened are greatly relished today. Perhaps the Boeotians had some way of preparing asparagus seeds before they had ripened and dried.

<sup>45</sup> *H. N.* xx, 110.

<sup>46</sup> Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i, 39.

<sup>47</sup> Isid. *Orig.* xvii, 7, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Varro, *L. L.* vi, 18.

<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately my authority for this does not give the original reference. I found the statement in Charles M. Skinner, *Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits, and Plants* (J. B. Lippincott Co., Phila., 1913), p. 113. Since I have found the statement elsewhere, there seems to be no reason to doubt its accuracy.



the Berads in Bombay the bride stands in a basket of millet, obviously because millet produces seeds in abundance.<sup>50</sup>

Nuts are the seeds of trees. Naturally only the kernels are eaten. Walnuts were employed at Roman weddings. Pliny (*H.N.* xv, 86) says that they have a twofold protection<sup>51</sup> and that they are consecrated to marriage because their *foetus* (*i.e.* kernel = seed) is safeguarded in so many ways. Hermesias, a concoction consisting of pine nuts and several other ingredients, was taken to ensure the creation of beautiful and healthy children.<sup>52</sup> There was a story to the effect that the mother of Attis was impregnated by an almond,<sup>53</sup> although another account says it was by a pomegranate.<sup>54</sup> In the Roman bridal procession the bridegroom scattered nuts for the boys in the crowd.<sup>55</sup> Apropos of this Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* remarks: "Though Catullus says that it signifies the putting away of childhood, it is much more likely that the nuts symbolised fruitfulness of marriage and plenty." Catullus was very probably trying to explain a custom the origin of which had been forgotten.<sup>56</sup> In antiquity a poor or incorrect explanation of a practice was better than none.

In Northern India the cocoanut used to be a sign of fertility.<sup>57</sup> Mangoes play a part in many supernatural births

<sup>50</sup> *Folk-Lore*, xiii, 235.

<sup>51</sup> *gemino . . . operimento, pulvinati primum calicis, mox lignei putaminis.*

<sup>52</sup> Pliny, *H. N.* xxiv, 166.

<sup>53</sup> Paus. vii, 17, 11.

<sup>54</sup> Arnob. v, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Verg. *E.* 8, 31; Catull. 61, 131; Festus, p. 179 (Lindsay).

<sup>56</sup> Among the Greeks figs, dates, nuts, and other things were showered upon the bride. See Harpocration (ed. Dindorf), p. 171, 11; scholium on Ar. *Plut.* 768; Hesych. *s.v.* *καταχύσματα*; Ath. xiv, 642 D. "The custom observed from India to the Atlantic Ocean of throwing grain and seeds of one sort or another over a bride, and apparently that of flinging old shoes, are intended to secure fecundity."—Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, i, p. 109. Compare Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, p. 216, n. Since, however, the Greeks threw dried fruits over newly bought slaves also, the act has been interpreted as intended to propitiate evil spirits. See Samter, *Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer*, p. 7; *id.* *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod*, pp. 172–173.

<sup>57</sup> Frazer, *The Magic Art*, ii, p. 51.

of Indian folk-tales.<sup>58</sup> In one region of Brittany "the groomsmen threw nuts to the husband all through the night, and the latter cracked them and gave the kernels to the bride to eat."<sup>59</sup>

Trees which were not propagated from seeds and which bore no fruit were called "infelices . . . damnataeque religione."<sup>60</sup> The Belgae called 'eunuch' (*spadonium*) a species of apple from which they had managed to eliminate the seed.<sup>61</sup> A species of rosemary which bore no seeds was described as 'sterile.'<sup>62</sup> Ovid recommended burning *mares oleae* as firewood on the ground that they bore no fruit.<sup>63</sup>

The reference to the pomegranate in the story of Attis shows that this fruit too was endowed with fertilizing powers. The seed was the powerful element within it. The modern Greek bridegroom may be required to hurl down the pomegranate and scatter its seeds upon the floor.<sup>64</sup> "In Turkey, when a bride throws its fruit to the earth, the seeds that fall out will indicate the number of her children, the significance of which practice was emphasized by the old masters, who show St. Catherine holding a pomegranate, as betokening the fruitage of the faith."<sup>65</sup> Khudadad, the sultan of the kingdom of Dijár Bakr, had many wives but no son. As the result of a dream he ate fifty pomegranate seeds, one to represent each of his wives. They gave birth to sons.<sup>66</sup> Writers are in

<sup>58</sup> Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, I, p. 77.

<sup>59</sup> Edward J. Wood, *The Wedding Day in All Ages and Countries*, II, p. 30.

<sup>60</sup> Pliny, *H. N.* XVI, 108: cf. XXIV, 68, and also Cato *ap. Fest.* p. 81 (Lindsay); Fronto, *ad Amic.* II, 7; Apul. *Apol.* 23.

<sup>61</sup> Pliny, *H. N.* XV, 51.

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.* XXIV, 99.

<sup>63</sup> *Fasti*, IV, 741.

<sup>64</sup> Lawson, *Modern Greek Folk-Lore and Ancient Greek Religion*, p. 559. There are many other references to the pomegranate in modern Greece as an emblem of fertility. See, for instance, Wood, *op. cit.* I, p. 46.

<sup>65</sup> C. M. Skinner, *Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits, and Plants*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>66</sup> R. F. Burton's edition of the *Arabian Nights*, x, pp. 139-141.

pretty general agreement that the pomegranate was a symbol of fruitfulness because of its numerous seeds.<sup>67</sup>

The idea that the eating of two grains or two seeds or twin-fruit would lead to the conception of twins is common in folklore,<sup>68</sup> but I have not found it in Greek or Latin.

The seeds of apples were employed as love-oracles by the Greeks. If pips squeezed out from the finger tips struck the ceiling, success in love was indicated.<sup>69</sup> There is a modern version of this: "Name apple seeds and shoot them at the ceiling. The one that hits the ceiling shows which one loves you best."<sup>70</sup> "The maidens in Durham have their own way of testing their lovers' fidelity. They will take an apple-pip, and, naming the lover, put the pip in the fire. If it makes a noise as it bursts with the heat, she is assured of his affection; if it burns away silently, she will be convinced that he has no true regard for her."<sup>71</sup> In the mountains of Kentucky apple seeds are counted when one wants to learn the number of children he will have.<sup>72</sup> Such notions are still common in many lands.

<sup>67</sup> Preller-Robert, *Griechische Mythologie* (1894), p. 763, n. 2; Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, I, p. 216; Frazer on Pausanias, II, 17, 4; Boetticher, *Der Baumkultus der Hellenen*, p. 471. The pomegranate was likewise connected with ideas of blood and death, Boetticher, *Archäologische Zeitung*, XIV, 1856, 169-176.

<sup>68</sup> Several instances are cited by Harris, *Boanerges*, pp. 168, 386, 387. See also Leland, *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, p. 226, and Thomas, *Kentucky Superstitions*, nos. 593, 594.

<sup>69</sup> Poll. IX, 128; Hor. *Sat.* II, 3, 272-273.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, *Kentucky Superstitions*, no. 207. For other lore of apple seeds and love see nos. 204-210. Compare also nos. 376-377.

<sup>71</sup> Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*, p. 106.

*Folk-Lore Record*, I, 30, records an English custom in which the popping of nuts is significant: "The nuts are placed in a bright fire side by side, the one of them belonging to a youth, the other to a maiden, who, after thinking of the loved name, repeat to themselves these words varying the pronoun according to sex,—

‘If he loves me, pop and fly,  
If he hates me, lie and die.’”

Contrast with this, however, Burns' "Halloween," stanza 7, according to which the nuts have to burn quietly side by side in order to make a good omen.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas, *op. cit.* no. 211. Compare no. 302.

We have seen that many forms of vegetation were associated with fertility by the ancients. In nuts it is obviously the kernels that cause growth. I believe that originally in the case of fruits the flesh corresponded to the shell or hull and that it had nothing to do with the popular ideas about the seat of life. It merely acted as a container for the seeds, which possessed the life-giving properties.

Seeds are, so to speak, the eggs<sup>73</sup> of a plant or fruit. They are the productive or reproductive parts. As one may acquire, by sympathetic magic, the bravery or other qualities of a man or animal by eating the heart, so by eating seeds, or things containing seeds, one may acquire fertility. It would seem, therefore, that originally it was because of the seeds that certain fruits and other forms of vegetation were linked with life-giving divinities.<sup>74</sup> I have no doubt that the function of seeds was understood long before the nature of human parentage.<sup>75</sup>

I believe, therefore, that it was seeds that rendered fruits eligible to become symbols of love. What was it then that gained for the apple its leading position in the lore of courtship?

<sup>73</sup> The Phrygians and the Lycaonians believed that the eggs of the partridge, a particularly salacious bird, were productive of fecundity if they were eaten after due ceremony (Pliny, *H. N.* xxx, 131). Among the Greeks eggs were regarded as productive of semen (Ath. ii, 65 A). The following sentence is found in a description of a Jewish ceremony by E. J. Wood, *op. cit.*, i, p. 21: "A hen ready dressed, and a raw egg, were then placed before the bride, as emblems of prolificness, and for an omen that she should bear many children." "A Polish tale represents a Gipsy woman as counselling a noble, but barren, lady to catch a fish full of roe in the sea, and to eat the roe at sunset at full-moontide. Her chambermaid, however, tastes it also, and, like her mistress, bears a son."—Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, i, p. 74. For other illustrations see also pages 74–76, 115, and *Primitive Paternity*, i, pp. 57–60, by the same author.

<sup>74</sup> We find Lucan (x, 208) associating seeds even with the planet Venus: "At fecunda Venus cunctarum semina rerum possidet."

<sup>75</sup> It is noteworthy that children have been and are still regarded as fruit or seed of marriage. See Preller, *Demeter and Persephone*, pp. 354 ff. For references to ἀρουρα used "metaphorically of a woman as receiving seed and bearing fruit," see Liddell and Scott.

A passage in Plutarch <sup>76</sup> shows that the purpose of the bride's eating the quince on the nuptial night was the conception of children. The fact that the quince was also a symbol of love <sup>77</sup> shows incidentally that in the case of the apple it was no idea of sweetness or blushing redness or any other sentimental association that caused its selection.<sup>78</sup>

In the *Symposiacs* (v, 8, 1) of Plutarch the question is raised why the apple tree is called ἀγλαόκαρποις, 'bearing fair fruit.' One banqueter explained that "the particular excellencies that are scattered amongst all other fruits are united in this alone. As to the touch it is smooth and clean, so that it makes the hand that touches it odorous without defiling it: it is sweet to the taste, and to the smell and sight very pleasing; and therefore there is reason that it should be duly praised, as that which congregates and allures all the senses together."<sup>79</sup> It is pertinent to recall here that the fruit which Sappho puts on the topmost branch out of the reach of the harvesters is the apple.<sup>80</sup>

It seems clear, therefore, that fertility was symbolized by growths with several or many seeds <sup>81</sup> and that it was because the apple was so popular that it gained first place among fruits in "the office and affairs of love."

<sup>76</sup> Solon, 20, 3.

<sup>77</sup> See Stesichorus, *Epithalamium of Helen* (frag. 29, Bergk, 1882); Plut. *Mor.* 138 D, 279 F; Prop. III, 13, 27; Ath. III, 81 D. Plutarch's explanation in the *Moralia* of the reason why the bride ate a quince is a pure makeshift.

<sup>78</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that Artemidorus, I, 73, does say that to dream of sour apples betokens love of strife and sedition.

<sup>79</sup> From the translations of Plutarch's *Miscellanies and Essays*, as corrected and revised by W. W. Goodwin.

<sup>80</sup> Frag. 93 (Bergk). See Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, III, 33-34, and compare I, 24; III, 25.

<sup>81</sup> The only exception I have found to this is in the case of seeds of the willow, which were recommended to be taken in drink as a method of causing sterility. See Ael. N. A. IV, 23; Pliny, H. N. XVI, 110; Isidore, *Orig.* XVII, 7, 47. The reason for this belief may be inferred from Theophr. H. P. III, 1, 13, who says that the willow is reputed to shed its fruit early before it is matured and quotes Homer, *Od.* x, 510, who calls it "fruit-losing." Arist. *Gen. Anim.* I, 18, 727, a, 6, quotes a popular delusion to the effect that no semen at all is produced by the willow.